

# American River Parkway Plan Update Citizen's Advisory Committee (UCAC)

## Meeting Highlights—February 28, 2006

### Key Outcomes

- UCAC members and the public gave feedback for revising Parkway Plan Chapter 6: Non-Recreational Use and Chapter 9: Public Safety. Agreed upon changes are listed in these notes in bold type with exclamation point bullets. Additional UCAC and public comments are listed in normal type with round bullets. These will be reviewed by staff in developing a final draft of this chapter.

### Decision Items for March 20, 2006 meeting 5:30-9 PM at the Library Galleria, 828 I St. in Sacramento

- UCAC member direction on Chapter 7 Land Use priority topics:
  - Visual impact policies
  - Recreation reserve areas\*
- Aesthetic Resources of the Parkway (carried over from Chapter 3: Resources of the Parkway)

\*Discussion of Chapter 7 on February 28 will include Parkway-wide policies about recreation reserve areas. Specific proposals for land use changes for area plans in Rancho Cordova, which includes a large area of recreation reserve, will be discussed in May.

### Welcome and Announcements

*Peter Tateishi resignation; Annemarie Vincent recognized.* Sunny Williams (County Planning) welcomed UCAC members and meeting attendees. She announced that the County Board of Supervisors has formally recognized Annemarie Vincent as the Parkway Foundation's representative to the UCAC. Peter Tateishi, formerly Muriel Johnson's appointee to the UCAC, has resigned due to new job duties that take him frequently to Washington, D.C. Susan Peters did not appoint a replacement for Peter due to the short remaining time frame for the Update. The UCAC now consists of 21 members and one ex-officio. Updated contact information for all UCAC members was circulated on a roster for committee members' use.

*Turtle Bay tour.* The City of Rancho Cordova and the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA) have offered to sponsor a UCAC tour to Redding to see the Turtle Bay museum. Potential dates were previously circulated to UCAC members; however, no date was found that worked for enough people. The tour will be rescheduled and offered before May.

*Rancho Cordova area plan proposals.* The Rancho Cordova City Council has asked its staff to conduct additional outreach to obtain public feedback on the concepts that were presented in the workshop on February 4<sup>th</sup>. Revised concepts for the area plans in Rancho Cordova will be presented at a UCAC meeting in May.

*Expedited completion of the Update.* Leighann Moffitt (County Planning) informed UCAC members that, at the last Board of Supervisors meeting, Board members were asked to approve a contract extension for the Update facilitators. The Board expressed support for the collaborative process of the Update but also had concerns that the Update has exceeded the amount of time and resources originally planned. The Board directed staff to wrap up the Update in a timely fashion. Staff worked with facilitators to devise a strategy (see below) to comply with the Board direction.

*Strategy for completion of the Update.* Staff distributed a revised schedule and explanatory memo entitled “UCAC Recommendations Expedited Completion Plan March-June 2006”. The Update is now planned to conclude in early June after five more UCAC meetings. Sharon Huntsman (Center for Collaborative Policy) explained that the strategy staff have outlined for the completion of the Update is consistent with the UCAC Charter and process to date. In order to help ensure the UCAC is able to give direction on all items that members have prioritized, agendas will now include each prioritized issue as a timed agenda item. The last half hour of each meeting will be open agenda time for members to add items from the Chapters under discussion that evening. In order to add an item to the agenda, at least half of the UCAC members present must agree that it is worth their time to discuss that item, because they believe they are likely to be able to reach agreement on a policy change. As always, staff can take comments offline on items that are not discussed by the full committee.

*The “No Recommendation” list and proposing additional items for the final UCAC meeting.* The strategy memo explains the “No Recommendation” list. This is a list of items that have been thoroughly discussed by the UCAC; however, the UCAC has not agreed upon a recommendation to change the 1985 plan policies. There are currently four items on this list—prioritizing Parkway goals, revising the language on “passive unstructured water-enhanced recreation”, permitting an off-leash dog recreation area inside of the IAP area, and a limitation on the square footage of an interpretive center in Discovery Park. Additional items might be added to this list during the remaining meetings, if UCAC members disagree strongly on an item they discuss. Items on the “No Recommendation” list when the process ends will be described in a memo to accompany the updated Parkway Plan. This memo will summarize the UCAC’s discussion and range of concerns on these topics.

If UCAC members want to have a recommendation on any of the items on the “No Recommendation” list, members will need to work offline to create a proposal that they believe can be approved by the UCAC by consensus or by vote. Any such proposal will need to be circulated in advance of the final meeting in June and can be added to the final meeting agenda if at least 3/5 of the Committee present at the final meeting agrees. Staff need to receive any such proposal for the final agenda by May 1, so that they can circulate it to the whole Committee for consideration.

*Revised chapters.* Sunny noted that some minor modifications were made to the draft Chapters 6 and 9 due to comments received. New versions of these Chapters were distributed.

### **UCAC Comment:**

- A UCAC member clarified that the UCAC recommended that there NOT be an off-leash dog area in the IAP area (Discovery Park, Woodlake, and Cal Expo). Staff will make it clear

on the “No Recommendation” list that the UCAC did not think the IAP area was an appropriate place for off-leash dog recreation.

## **High Priority UCAC Policies in Chapter 6: Non-Recreational Uses of the Parkway.**

Sunny Williams (County Planning) reviewed the draft of Chapter 6 dated 2/28/06, noting all proposed changes from the 1985 Parkway Plan

### **UCAC comment on policies 6.6 and 6.7: Agricultural activities in the Parkway:**

- What is an agricultural activity? –Gary Kukkola (County Parks) replied that the range of uses includes the agricultural leases that exist (e.g. the Brinkley lease in the Rancho Cordova reach). This might also include the Soil Born Farms proposal for an organic farm and native plant nursery in the Rancho Cordova area.
- Does Parks have anything to say about what kind of crops can be planted there? –Gary Kukkola (County Parks) replied that in the past, Parks staff have acted on the recommendation of the agricultural commissioners’ office based on suitability of the land for the crops proposed.
- Are there any crops that would be undesirable in the Parkway?—The only crops that have been planted recently are wheat and safflower. There may be others that are suitable, some would not be.
- I suggest that if the area is no longer leased, it should be restored as habitat with native species to American River Parkway. That should be a preferred use. We could pay for it with mitigation bank funds.
- After a lease expires, does the County have a certain amount of time to get another lease in place? I think there should be some leeway, but we should not let so much time pass that the former agriculture area develops non-native invasive plants.
- From the Rancho Cordova workshop, Soil Born Farms proposed “wildlife friendly farming.” His farming is organic, too. We could have some language supporting organic and wild-life friendly farming.
- Organic better than releasing pesticides in waterways.

### **Public comment:**

- The language in the 1985 Plan called for a native plant nursery and demonstration garden. Soil Born Farms is working on that template.
- ! **There have not yet been educational and interpretive activities on agriculture lease land. The Plan should state that this will be preferred as part of the agreement for future agriculture leases.” (The UCAC supported this comment as a preference, not a requirement.)**
- I am a teacher and have worked with demonstration gardens. It really does add an educational resource to the community to learn about the diversity of open space.
- I am an environmental scientist at the state. I really see how compatible the Soil Born Farms’ proposal is with restoration at the site, e.g. restoration of the stream and providing wildlife habitat.

### **Additional UCAC comment and direction:**

- I presume agriculture in Parkway will not include community gardening. I do not want to see that. —Staff clarified that there is no language proposed that would allow that use.
- If organic becomes a firm policy that is rigid and unyielding, that means no West Nile Virus spraying. It can mean that vegetation management requires soil disturbance rather than chemical treatments. There might be circumstances under which a rigid requirement to farm organic is not an ideal way to manage the land. I have no problem with stating a preference for organic in the Plan, but it should not be a prohibition of all non-organic methods.
- Staff commented that agriculture leases in the past have been effective to put land into productive use in a holding manner pending some future use. The agricultural leases might be managed by farmers who might not have skill set or knowledge to do interpretation or education effectively. People who might otherwise be willing to farm the lands might be scared away by a requirement to do interpretive activities.
- I don't think that requiring interpretation is a problem because it might be as little as signage stating "This is a field of wheat."
- ! **UCAC members support including a preference for restoration on former agriculture lands. They also support a preference for wildlife friendly and organic farming, but not a requirement. Interpretive education in some capacity will be included in future lease agreements.**
- What permit is needed for new facilities crossing the Parkway? —Staff replied that this is a matter of existing legal easements. An easement would have to be negotiated through County real estate, and conditions could be placed on it. Even if the County didn't own the land, if it would have to cross Parks land, Parks would be involved.

### **UCAC Comment on the sale of food and beverages, policy 6.1.6.**

- Are other commercial activities covered elsewhere such as gift shops and entrance fees to interpretive centers? — Services and sales are talked about in the narrative in Chapter 6, though there are no policies other than for food and beverage. The narrative does clarify that other commercial things occur in Parkway.
- There is a restaurant / clubhouse at the golf course in Ancil Hoffman. With the exception of that one, restaurants should be excluded from the Parkway. I am concerned that this policy might allow a full-blown restaurant. —This policy allows food and beverage sales as a mobile use at a special event, or as a component of a recreational or interpretive facility.
- You have to define restaurant. There is a clear policy that there should be no use that brings users in that wouldn't already be using the Parkway. Any food and beverage sales that are allowed should facilitate existing uses of the Parkway.
- I can live with 6.1.6 because it's all on a by-permit basis.
- How does this relate to permanent structures for food and beverage? —This is by special event or as part of a permanent facility. The way it is written, it could be a permanent use, for example a raft rental could sell food and beverages. The policy would not prevent Effie Yeaw, for example, from opening a restaurant. The intention is only to attach food and beverage sales to permitted facilities as a secondary component to support that use.
- This can be interpreted several ways. Need to wordsmith to make it clear.

- Why was this changed from the 1985 Parkway Plan? —The thought was to allow a secondary aspect of a permitted use—e.g. if raft rental wants to sell water and snacks. We're trying to clarify that is acceptable. There is a proposal that the raft rental on Sunrise might move into the Parkway; the Board has directed staff to negotiate. It currently exists outside the Parkway.
- I (Renee Taylor) represent American River Raft Rentals, the company that is negotiating with Parks to move into the Parkway, and am speaking as a representative of that. Maybe things that are portable, that don't need to be heated, packaged goods, are acceptable—probably there are food service terms to differentiate fresh from packaged. Fresh heated restaurant goods are a whole different kind of permit, which my client doesn't have and isn't interested in. My client is not interested in opening a restaurant. But speaking for myself, I am hesitant to forbid that. The Parkway Plan lasts a long time, and there might be a future appropriate use that includes fresh restaurant-type food. I have respect for the managers who will make that decision in the future.
- Maybe we need a combination of what is in 1985 Plan and this proposed policy. Allow the existing restaurant at Ancil Hoffman but no more permanent facilities with a restaurant atmosphere. But do allow mobile day use units and secondary uses associated with permitted facilities.
- I am concerned that this is too vague. I want to allow things that have been going on in Parkway, such as barbecues and food sales associated with special events, but I don't want new restaurants.

**Public comment:**

- I am concerned about prohibiting selling fresh food like apples or bananas. I don't want a commercial kitchen cooking, but anything that comes in a package or as a snack would be okay.
- Regarding policy 6.1.3.b there was a lot of discussion about this 20 years ago. It needs more clarification. We don't want to attract outsiders to the Parkway just for using a facility like a restaurant. The purpose of having a facility is to augment and improve the experience of existing Parkway users.
- Eliminate restaurants where you cook and serve food. Support mobile day use. I am reluctant to support allowing food and beverage sales as an auxiliary component to a permanent facility.
- I support that food can be sold in conjunction with a recreational activity, but be aware that it contributes to litter issues.
- The limited recreation agricultural area in Rancho Cordova has allowed for a produce stand. I don't want to be prohibited to sell produce. The current proposal seems like it would prohibit that.
- This language looks like it would permit a permanent restaurant.
- Food is currently cooked on site at Discovery Park for special events, e.g. the Zone concert.

**Additional UCAC comment and direction on policy 6.1.6:**

- ! **Bring forward the exception for the existing restaurant in Ancil Hoffman? Yes.**
- ! **Okay with mobile uses? Yes.**

- Auxillary component should NOT be a commercial restaurant or café or commercial kitchen? A poll was taken: 9 UCAC members support banning restaurants, cafes, and commercial kitchens; 4 did not. Because this is not enough to approve a recommendation by vote or consensus, this will go on the “No Recommendation” list. (Recorder note: UCAC member Ron Stork requested during the break to be added to the poll as against restaurants, cafes, and commercial kitchens, which would change the poll to 10 to 4. This does not change the outcome of putting this item on the “No Recommendation” list.) (Additional process note: Poll amended on 3/20 to change Renee Taylor’s vote from “do not support a ban” to “abstain.” Final poll numbers are 10 support a ban on restaurants, cafes, or commercial kitchens; 3 do not support; 1 abstain.)
- ! Should a produce stand associated with an agricultural lease be permitted? If you’re not on the Parkway to use it for Parkway uses, I think it should be discouraged. (After discussion, this UCAC member was convinced that the produce stand could be okay if it were associated with and served people who came to the organic farm for educational purposes.) **Staff will revise language so that it does not preclude the existing produce stand.**
- ! Would the native plant nursery sell native plants? –Yes. Does anyone want to constrain the sale of native plants? No! **Staff will add language, if needed, clarifying that the sale of native plants is okay.**
- What causes exist to terminate a farming operation? –Either party can terminate with adequate notice, without cause, as written now. If the Soil Born Farms activity is approved, they will be looking for a longer term agreement. County Parks will accommodate that with appropriate conditions. Allowing the sale of their products on the farm could be stipulated in the agreement if Parkway Plan doesn’t preclude it.
- Why wouldn’t you allow the same to an interpretive center, to sell native foods for consumption on site or to take home?
- 6.1.2 as currently written gives power to County Parks and the BOS to make the determination of whether an interpretive center could sell food as an auxiliary component.
- I don’t want to overly limit the possibilities. Maybe a native American interpretive center wants to have a café selling native food. I can’t imagine what might come up, but if it is a permitted use and food and beverage is a secondary component, let the BOS make the determination of what is appropriate.
- I (Lea Brooks) am concerned that UCAC member Renee Taylor has stated she has a client with an interest in selling food and beverage in the Parkway. Should Renee be voting on issues that would benefit her client? –Staff replied that transparency and disclosure are important to the process, and thanked Renee for being transparent. No other policies have come up that affect her client—she would clarify if this were the case. If a formal vote is taken on any policy that affects her client, Renee will not vote. No formal votes were taken tonight.

Process note: After the 2/28 UCAC meeting, County Counsel was consulted on Committee member responsibilities vis-à-vis conflict of interest. Counsel clarified that, in addition to disclosing financial interests and not participating in decision-making on items affecting their financial interests, UCAC members should not participate in discussions or polling on any such items. The poll above on banning restaurants/cafes/commercial kitchens was amended on 3/20 to change Renee’s vote from “do not support a ban” to “abstain”.

- Is there a café or restaurant in the proposals that Rancho Cordova has for its area plans? -- No.

## High Priority UCAC Policies in Chapter 9: Public Safety.

Gary Kukkola and Dave Lydick from County Parks explained the process that staff used to revise this section. They solicited input from eight other agencies that provide safety in the Parkway, including Sacramento City Police Department, Sacramento Sheriff, Sacramento City Fire, Sacramento Metro Fire, Sacramento County Fire, and the Rancho Cordova Police Department. Advance comments from UCAC members Eric Johnson, Eddie Kho, and Al Freitas were incorporated. The narrative in this Chapter has been expanded quite a bit to respond to Committee concerns about recognizing the importance of public safety in the Parkway to Parkway users and adjacent neighborhoods.

### UCAC comment and direction:

- ! Policy 9.4 should have a time goal on when maps are provided. “Pro-active” is too vague. There should be a standard. **Staff will revise this section to “shall provide yearly updated maps.”**
- I would like to see a policy that encourages stakeholder groups to be involved in public safety issues. This could be included with promoting stewardship e.g. native plant removal.
- I see stewardship as encouraging respect and appreciation. I am not comfortable with asking people to assume a policing role. I am comfortable with the equestrian patrol role. Don’t give authority to users that doesn’t already exist.
- There needs to be coordinated infrastructure to stewardship, by which I mean authorities in charge so that there is consistency and training.
- ! **Staff will revise this language to encourage “stewardship to promote safety and responsible use of Parkway resources, and supplement existing Parkway Ranger resources.” The example of the equestrian patrol will be cited, and the issue of having a coordinating body and training will be included.**
- Why does policy 9.9 talk about signage? Signage is in its own section.—Another UCAC member replied that a little redundancy is okay with signage.
- Gary Kukkola (County Parks) asked UCAC members to comment on emergency phones. They’re currently out there one per mile. Are they obsolete? They are disappearing in some places due to cell phones. Do they give a sense of relief that if all else fails?
- Is there much vandalism of emergency phones? –No.
- How do you report an issue? It’s too late if you see someone disobeying the rules. Need more response, more rangers. I’d like to bring back rangers on horses.
- Users don’t always carry cell phones on bikes, running, or on horses. There is utility to having the call boxes.
- Not everyone has a cell phone. Call boxes need better coordination—you call and the operators don’t know where you are.
- We have emergency call boxes on the trail, not in turfing areas or picnic areas. We might consider placing them off the trail, but County Parks would have to pay for them.

- ! Call boxes are most valuable in places where there are not a lot of people, e.g. areas of the lower Parkway where the perception is that the area is unsafe. Maybe call boxes are part of a solution. **Staff will add a policy statement that emphasizes the need to maintain or expand call boxes as a public safety benefit.**
- ! Courtesy rules have everything to do with safety. How do you incorporate courtesy rules that may change, maybe reference an ordinance that can change. The best set of rules was developed by the in-line skating task force. **Staff will add a policy about the importance of courtesy rules, which are implemented by ordinance.**
- How often are emergency phones checked? --They automatically call in to a computer on a weekly basis. A contractor comes out every six months to check on site and clean them.
- Why are rules of Parkway not in this section, e.g. speed limit. --The regulatory rules are dealt with under County ordinance. Staff are reluctant to put that level of specificity in the Plan since those rules might reasonably change over time.
- Need to prioritize locations of call boxes where people feel less safe.
- This section is about coordination of public safety agencies. Most citations last year were for illegal camping; the next highest number was alcohol citations. With such pervasive problems, I'd like to see at least one policy statement, maybe that we need to coordinate with social services agencies and provide education to reduce illegal camping. We need to acknowledge the issue in the policies to let the BOS know this is an issue that impacts all of us. We need to send a strong statement to BOS. They have done a lot so far, but it is a priority one issue. Move it up from narrative. **Staff will add a policy acknowledging the importance of safety issues and encouraging coordination with social service agencies to reduce illegal camping.**

#### **Public comment:**

- Call boxes need to stay in place. I've used the one in Bannister Park. People in the neighborhoods like those and get distressed when they're non-operational.
- Call boxes in parks such as William Pond and Ancil Hoffman and Discovery would be a good idea.

#### **UCAC issues for Open Agenda Time: Chapters 6 and 9**

- ! **On policy 9.1.7—insert the word “motor” vehicle to differentiate from bicycle bridges. Make sure this does not prevent or impact light rail.**
- ! The Parkway has a resource manager, Trevor Burwell (County Parks / SAFCA). **The Plan should indicate that there is one person, e.g. a “go-to” person, who is designated by the Parkway manager.**
- ! A UCAC member suggested several items from the narrative that could be policies. **Staff will review these suggestions and move them to policy as appropriate.**
  - On page 6 of the draft, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph under fire breaks, the added text should be policy.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> sentence and 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence of 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph on page 6 should be policy.

- Last line on page 6 should be policy.
- 1<sup>st</sup> sentence on page 7 “Ranger personnel are responsible” should be in policy 9.3 or 9.4.
- Prescribed burns should be policy.
- Availability of water for fire suppression should be in policy.
- Let’s not micromanage Parks. Let them review the narrative and move parts to policy if they want to.
- ! For policy 9.8, it is realistic to have mile markers every quarter mile? We have them now every half mile. **Staff will change this to half-mile.**
- What is the Knox system referred to in policy 9.1.5? It is an existing system with keys that only public safety providers have. Something better might come along. **Staff will remove the word “Knox.”**

**Public comment:**

No further public comment at this time.

**Action Items & Follow-Up**

Who	What	When
Committee Members	If you have a proposal you would like to add to the agenda for the final UCAC meeting in June, send to staff for vetting with the full Committee.	By May 1
Staff and consultants	Revise Chapters 9 and 6 to reflect UCAC direction	

**Meeting Materials**

- Agenda
- Memo from Robert Sherry, Director of County Planning entitled “Expedited American River Parkway Plan Update Process”
- “UCAC Recommendations Expedited Completion Plan March-June 2006” Dated February 24, 2006 (includes Schedule of Remaining Meetings and Agenda Topics for Each Meeting)
- Revised Chapter 6: Non-Recreational Uses of the Parkway
- Revised Chapter 9: Public Safety

**Attendance**

Members: X=Present, Alt=Alternate present

	Name		Representing
	Jerry	Ahlin	City of Rancho Cordova Appointment
Wendy Sturges	Katie	Baygell	American River Parkway Volunteer Equestrian Patrol

X	Peggy	Berry	District 2 - Supervisor Collin Appointment
X	Lea	Brooks	Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates (SABA)
X	Frank	Cirill	Save the American River Association (SARA)
	Dave	Ford	California Fly Fishers Unlimited
X	Al	Freitas	Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS)
X	Michael	Gunby	Sacramento City Appointments
X	Lou	Heinrich	American River Natural History Association
X	Bob	Horowitz	Sacramento Area Mountain Biking Association (SAMBA)
X	Eric	Johnson	Dist 1 - Supervisor Dickinson Appointment
X	Eddie	Kho	Dist 5 - Supervisor Notolli Appointment
	Connie	Miottel	Sacramento City Appointments
	Mark	Murray	Buffalo Chips Running Club
X	Ted	Sheedy	Sacramento City Appointments
	Janel	Silva	Sacramento Area Dog Owners Group (SACDOG)
	Greg	Speicher	Boating
X	Renée	Taylor	Dist 4 - Supervisor Niello Appointment
X	Annemarie	Vincent	American River Parkway Foundation
X	Frank	Wallace	California Native Plant Society (CNPS)
	Art	White	Sacramento County Recreation and Parks Commission: ex-officio
x	Melinda	Williams	Sacramento City Appointments

## Others

Leighann Moffit, County Planning  
 Tim Washburn, SAFCA  
 Brian May, CalExpo  
 Teresa Haenggi, Sacramento City Parks  
 Steve Launey, CalExpo  
 Kathleen Franklin, City of Rancho Cordova

JP Tindell, Sacramento City Parks  
 Lee Frachette, Cordova Parks and Rec District  
 Dave Lydick, County Parks

Kevin Regan  
 Betsy Weiland  
 Burt Hodges  
 Rob Lang  
 Patty Kleinknecht

Elhmer Aldrich  
 Shawn Harrison  
 Chris Lewis  
 Tim Cassera

## Project Staff

Sunny Williams, County Planning  
 Gary Kukkola, Sacramento County Parks  
 Sharon Huntsman, Facilitator, Center for Collaborative Policy  
 Laura Kaplan, Center for Collaborative Policy